

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 ARA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01
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R 050655Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9894
AMEMBASSY LONDON
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USINT HAVANA
AMCONSUL KADUNA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 9719

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, NI, CU, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET REACTION TO OBASANJO'S KHARTOUM SPEECH

1. ITALIAN CHARGE ARAGONA TOLD POLCOUNS THAT,
DURING A COURTESY CALL, THE NEW DIRECTOR OF
MEA'S AFRICA DEPARTMENT AMB. LUKE OSOBASE
INFORMED HIM THAT THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR
HAD LODGED A PROTEST WITH MEA OVER
THE HEAD OF STATE'S KHARTOUM SPEECH. THE SOVIET
AMBASSADOR FIRST SPOKE WITH MEA EUROPEAN
DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR SOKOYA, PROTESTING OBASANJO'S
TREATMENT OF SOVIET AND CUBAN ACTIVITIES IN
AFRICA IN HIS SPEECH AND HIS STATEMENT THAT
THE SOVIETS AND THEIR FRIENDS SHOULD NOT OVERSTAY THEIR
WELCOME. WHEN SOKOYA DID NOT GIVE HIM THE ANSWERS HE
WANTED TO HEAR, THE SOVIET AMBASSADOR ASKED TO SEE OSOBASE,
WHO REPORTEDLY INFORMED HIM THAT NIGERIA'S POLICY DOES NOT
CHANGE FROM ONE MEA DEPARTMENT TO THE OTHER.

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2. ACCORDING TO ARAGONA, OSOBASE SAID THE
NIGERIANS HAVE BEEN INCREASINGLY CONCERNED
OVER SOVIET INVOLVEMENT IN AFRICA AND BELIEVE THE SOVIETS
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PRESENT FIGHTING IN ERITREA.
HE ALSO SAID THAT NIGERIA HAS EXPRESSED ITS CONCERNS MORE
THAN ONCE TO THE SOVIET UNION.

3. IN THIS CONNECTION, OSOBASE SAID NIGERIA IS BECOMING MORE AND MORE TROUBLED OVER THE LACK OF MOVEMENT ON ZIMBABWE. FAILURE OF THE UK/US INITIATIVE WILL MOST CERTAINLY LEAVE THE DOOR OPEN FOR SOVIET OR CUBAN INVOLVEMENT. OSOBASE SAID THERE WAS APPREHENSION IN THE MINISTRY THAT MOVES IN THE U.S. CONGRESS TO LIFT SANCTIONS WOULD HARDEN THE RESOLVE OF SMITH AND CO. NOT TO ENTER INTO AN ALL-PARTIES CONFERENCE. MOREOVER, THE NIGERIANS ARE EVEN MORE WORRIED OVER BRITAIN'S ZIMBABWE POLICY. THEIR CONTACTS IN LONDON INDICATE THE BRITISH ARE EXTREMELY FLEXIBLE WITH REGARD TO THE INTERNAL SOLUTION AND WILL NEED LITTLE ENCOURAGEMENT TO ABANDON THE UK/US INITIATIVE.

WYMAN

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